

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the Summary of Invention section on page 2, line 25 through page 7, line 11 with the following amended section:

--The above-mentioned object can be attained, according to the present invention, by the following configuration.

There is provided an inventory management system including a first storage unit, adapted to store inventory information indicating an inventory number of an expendable used in a printer, a receiver unit, adapted to receive absence information indicating that the inventory number of the expendable is zero or less than a predetermined number, and an instruction unit, adapted to provide a delivery instruction for delivery of the expendable. A second storage unit is adapted to store history information indicating a history of the delivery instruction provided by the instruction unit, and an information unit is adapted to inform an alarm based on (1) the history information stored in the second storage unit and (2) a new reception of the absence information received by the receiver unit, after the instruction unit provides the delivery instruction. ~~an information processing apparatus for acquiring, from a peripheral device management apparatus for managing information specific to a peripheral device connected through a local area network, information specific to the aforementioned peripheral device through an external network, and, from a general-purpose computer management apparatus for managing information specific to a general-purpose computer connected through the aforementioned local area network, information specific to the aforementioned general-purpose computer through the aforementioned external network thereby executing unified management of~~

~~the aforementioned peripheral device and the aforementioned general-purpose computer, comprising discrimination means for discriminating whether information received through the aforementioned external network is information specific to the peripheral device or information specific to the general-purpose computer, specifying means for specifying, in case the information received through the external network is discriminated as information specific to the peripheral device and indicating absence of inventory by the discrimination means, information for specifying expendable contained in the aforementioned information indicating the absence of inventory, and information and information for identifying the user constituting the owner of the expendable of which inventory is absent, and display control means for causing a predetermined display unit to display the type of the expendable specified by the specifying means and the information for identifying the user.~~

~~In a preferred embodiment, there is further provided instruction means for instructing, to a distribution server communicable through the external network, the delivery of the expendable of a type specified by the specifying means to a destination based on the information of the aforementioned user.~~

~~Also in a preferred embodiment, the aforementioned user information includes the e-mail address for communication and there is further provided confirmation mail informing means for informing the aforementioned e-mail address of a confirmation mail for instructing the delivery of the expendable of the type of which inventory is absent, as specified by the specifying means.~~

~~Also in a preferred embodiment, there is further provided alarm means, after the delivery instruction is issued by the instruction means, for giving an alarm through the external~~

network to the aforementioned distribution server or to a portable terminal assigned to a person in charge of delivery, in response to the reception of information indicating the absence or decrease of inventory of the expendable of the type specified by the specifying means.—

Also in a preferred embodiment, the aforementioned information indicating the absence of inventory includes information indicating the remaining quantity of inventory of the aforementioned expendable.—

Also in a preferred embodiment, the acquisition* means includes first acquisition means for acquiring, through the external network, information on a general-purpose computer connected through the local area network; and second acquisition means for acquiring, through the external network, information specific to the peripheral device connected to the local area network;

wherein the first acquisition means acquires the information on the general-purpose computer in a first format specific to the general-purpose computer; and the second acquisition means acquires the information on the peripheral device in a second format specific to the peripheral device.—

Also in a preferred embodiment, there is further provided conversion means for converting the information of the first format, relating to the general-purpose computer and acquired by the first acquisition means into the second format, and the aforementioned display unit is provided in an apparatus capable of interpreting the second format and is capable of display based on the second format.—

Also in a preferred embodiment, there is further provided conversion means for converting the information of the second format, relating to the peripheral device and acquired by

~~the second acquisition means into the first format, and the aforementioned display unit is provided in an apparatus capable of interpreting the first format and is capable of display based on the first format.~~

~~Also in a preferred embodiment, there is further provided conversion means for converting the information of the first format, relating to the general-purpose computer and acquired by the first acquisition means and the information of the second format, relating to the peripheral device and acquired by the second acquisition means, into a common third format, and the aforementioned display unit is capable of displaying information based on the third format.~~

~~Otherwise there are provided reception means for receiving information of no inventory indicating that the inventory is less than a predetermined number for the expendable of each type to be used in the peripheral device, together with information for specifying the user; and~~

~~information means for informing, after a delivery instruction in response to the reception of information on the expendable of each type included in the no inventory information received by the reception means and the information for specifying the user, an alarm through the external network to a communication address assigned to a person in charge of the delivery instruction, in response to the reception of information indicating absence or decrease of the inventory of the expendable of the specified type.--~~